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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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The situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran from the NGOs' perspective.

1- The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), in an unprecedented initiative, invited other active non-governmental organizations in human rights issues to cooperate for holding a conference on human rights day (10 December 2001) in Tehran. This invitation was highly welcomed and after a series of expert meetings, for the first time, the event was held in Tehran on 10 December that brought great achievements. The report of the Conference has been prepared by the public relations department of the ODVV.

2- To hold this conference in a scientific way based on the human rights standards, nine working groups were organized on women's rights, children's rights, refugees' rights, youth issues, right to development, violence against women, minorities' rights, disabled people and equal opportunities, drug trafficking and its effects on the enjoyment of human rights. All the efforts of the non-governmental organizations were focused on drafting a statement on the situation of human rights in Iran. Due to the importance of this statement, its complete text has been included here. We hope that the members of the Commission on Human Rights pay due attention to this statement.

In the name of the God that created mankind equal

Today, while history has taught the peoples of the world that bloody wars, political violence, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, racial, ethnic, religious and gender discriminations have all started because of the denial of human dignity, human rights have been emphasized as a most fundamental principle for justice, development and peace.

Today human rights are recognized as the result of years of painful attempts of peoples to achieve security and sustainable development. It's a precious legacy, which calls for all governments to recognize the equal and inherent dignity of their citizens and urges them to refrain from oppression and discriminatory acts.

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights instituted permanent ideals for a fairer world and today in the 53rd year of the ratification of this worldwide declaration, the representatives of Iranian civil society, non-governmental organizations, experts and all those who are concerned about discrimination, and who think of the paramount objective for the recognition of fundamental freedoms of all mankind, have come together to commemorate and remember years of human pain and suffering and with an obligation to the spirit of the Declaration, emphasize on the following points:

- While believing in the fundamental principles of human rights, we emphasize that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated no individual or authority has the right to divide and select these rights. We also declare that no kind of discrimination or supremacy can be imposed on human rights. A human being has the same equal rights to political and civil rights as to cultural, social and economic rights.

- While believing in the equality of every human being with regards to his or her rights, we declare that every individual has the right to live in freedom and dignity and governments must safeguard people's rights and dignity regardless of their skin color, opinion and sex.

- With an emphasis on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is the result of years of painstaking efforts of governments, NGOs, law makers, religious leaders and the human rights defenders all over the world, we expect the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with attention to its right to reservation, clearly declare the conflicting articles with the Constitution and prepare the groundwork for its implementation. Also the protection and promotion of children's fundamental rights requires for adoption of a special law regarding children's crimes, its prosecution and punishments.

- Believing that the youth are a great treasure trove of the process of social life and noting that over 60% of the population of the country are the young people, we insist on having education rights, employment rights, the right to have an opinion and on social and cultural status. We also stress that sustainable development cannot be accomplished if the significant role of the youth and their political needs and their fundamental role in policymaking and governmental activities are not recognized.

- Stressing that the human rights of women and girls is an inseparable and unstoppable part of general human rights believe that if the human rights of half of the population of the world can be violated and denied then the rights of the other half of the population will deteriorate. We also stress that the inborn development of humanity stresses on the eradication of gender discrimination.

- Emphasizing that the fundamental rights of all refugees regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion and color of skin, we believe that despite existing problems there should be conditions so that the formal refugees residing in the Islamic Republic of Iran can enjoy all their human rights, in particular the right to legal and honest employment, health and education, and all forms of legal protection and support. Also, since the host countries are not bound to provide all facilities, we request for the aid of the international community for meeting refugees' needs.

- Finally, believing that all humans are born with equal rights and humanity is the criterion for having such rights, we declare that the rights of every single individual, minorities and social groups as clearly stated in the Islamic Republic's Constitution, be officially recognized. Therefore:

I) In accordance to Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that stipulates the right to form peaceful groups and institutions, and Article 26, which calls this as part of the rights of a nation, we call governments to facilitate the activities of volunteer social groups and to adopt the necessary laws for the registration of non-governmental and voluntary and popular organizations.

II) In accordance to Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution which stipulate on the freedom of opinion, this freedom is the right of humanity and the press and publications are free to express their opinions, we call for the Islamic Parliament to codify and ratify political crimes and press laws.

III) As the creation of the human rights culture needs the active participation of people all over the world, civil bodies such as NGOs can be very important means in the defense and promotion of human rights. Based on this necessity we declare that the network of human rights NGOs in pursuit of this important realization shall be established and shall operate in a non-political and unbiased way.

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, Institute for Women's Studies and Research, Society for Protection of Handicapped Children and Youth, Society for Protection and Assistance to Sociologic Disadvantaged Individuals, Society for Supporting Human Rights of Women, Society of Young Translators and Researchers, Society for Protection of the Rights of the Blind, International Institute of Green Pad, Association of Family Health and Education Promotion, Center for Culture and Development, Human Rights Monitor

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